living Below Poverty Line in Jammu region for coverage under the Centrally sponsored scheme; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) and (b) No Sir. However, BPL families have been identified all over the country. The State Government of Jammu and Kashmir have identifed all the 7.36 lakh BPL families as estimated by the Planning Commission.

Amendment of Consumer Protection Act

1608. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are thinking of amending the Consumer Protecton Act, 1986 to make it more effective and consumer friendly;

(b) if so, the details of the amendments that Government are thinking of bringing before the Parliament for its approval; and

(c) how Government are thinking of empowering the consumers to deal with sellers not residing in the country but selling goods or providing services to consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) and (b) The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 (68 of 1986) has recently been amended vide the Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act, 2002 (62 of 2002). Among others, the following are the important amendments made in the said Act;

(i) Creation of benches of the National Commission and State Commissions and holding of circuit benches;

(ii) Prescribing time-frame for admission of complaint, issue of notices and disposal of complaint;

(iii) Exclusion of services availed for commercial purposes;

iv) Recovery of compensation amount ordered by the redressal agency through certificate case as arrears of land revenue;

v) Provision for issue of interim orders by the redressal agencies;

vi) Establishment of consumer protection council at district level;

vii) Enhancement of the capabilities of the consumer forums, strengthening them with more powers, streamlining the procedures and widening the scope of the Act for quick disposal of the complaints.

viii) Simplification of the procedures for selection of the Members of the State Commission and President and Members of the District Forum.

ix) Empowering the senior most Member to perform as President in the absence of the regular President of the National Commission, State Commission and the District Forum for smooth and uninterrupted functioning of these forums.

(c) No specific amendment has been made to make provisions in the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 empowering the consumers to deal with the sellers/service providers residing out side India.

Funding by Financial Institutions for NER

1609. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that funding by the Financial Institutions for the development programme of the North Eastern Region has been abysmally low for some time past;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the volume of fund flow to NE Region for the past three years, State-wise and year-wise;

(c) whether the reasons for the low rate of investment in the NE Region have been identified and if, so the details thereof; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard for mobilising funds flow, in the aforesaid region?